

IN THE DRAWINGS:

FIG. 55A, change "HONE" to --HOME--. (Please see the proposed amended drawing attached hereto.)

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the patentability of all of the remaining claims of this application in view of the above amendments and the following comments.

The amendment of the drawing corrects a minor typographical error and does not introduce any prohibited new matter. Entry of this amendment is therefore solicited.

The objections to claims 1, 5, 12 and 36 under 35USC 112 is respectfully traversed based on the above claim amendments. Entry of these amendments is therefore solicited.

The rejection of claims 1-39 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), as being unpatentably obvious in view of the disclosures of the Edson (U.S. Pat. No. 6,526,581) and the Amro (U.S. Pat. No. 6,507,762) references is respectfully traversed.

First, claims 1-15, 18-30, 32, 33, and 35-39 have been amended, and the claims 16 and 17 have been cancelled. Each of the amended claims 1 and 29 contains features obtained by modifying features of the claims 16 and 17. It is believed that the modified features in the amended claims are disclosed in and/or supported by the instant specification as originally filed, especially the disclosure of the sixth embodiment of the present invention (see especially line 10 of page 26 to line 28 of page 28). Therefore, it is urged that these amendments be entered.

It is pointed out that the subject matter of independent amended claims 1 and 29 is distinctly different from the material disclosed in the Edson patent considered alone or taken in combination with the disclosure of the Amro patent.

Amended claim 1 of the present application defines a gateway apparatus having an appliance control command producing unit. The gateway apparatus is adapted to receive a control instruction from at least one of control devices through a first and/or second network, and the appliance control command producing unit acts to convert the control instruction into a control command. The appliance being controlled then operates in response to the control command.

The control devices include a first control device that is adapted to output a control instruction indicating a series of operations to be performed by the controlled appliance. When the appliance, in its current status, requires the appliance control command producing unit to preferentially accept the series of operations indicated by the control instruction of the first control device, the appliance control command producing unit records a control device ID of the first control device as priority control device ID information. When one or more control instructions sent from one or more control devices, including the first control device, are received, the appliance control command producing unit preferentially accepts the control instruction sent from the first control device on the basis of both a control device ID of each of the control devices sending the control instructions and the priority control device ID information, and determines to produce a control command valid for the required series of operations. Therefore, the appliance preferentially performs the series of operations in response to the control command.

In the same manner, in the remote control system defined by the amended claim 29, the appliance can preferentially perform the series of operations. Accordingly, even if a control instruction from another control device is received during the series of operations, the gateway apparatus, or the remote control system, can prevent the instruction from the other control device from interrupting the previously ordered series of operations. In other words, if the appliance starts to perform a series of operations without any priority, there is high probability that the gateway apparatus will accept a control instruction from another control device during the series of operations that are already being carried out in the appliance. In this case, the initially commanded series of operations is undesirably interrupted. Therefore, according to the present invention, the appliance is required to preferentially perform the first ordered series of operations before accepting any further operational commands.

In contrast, the Edson patent discloses a multi-service in-home network with an open interface. A gateway provides the open software interface to control in-home communications and to enable remote in-home devices to selectively access external communication features. An in-home communication network connects the gateway to the device interfaces (see Abstract). The gateway 13 includes a firewall 101, a router 103 and a CPU 105. The CPU 105 provides

overall control of all operations of the gateway 105. Programming 109 of the CPU 105 implements an operating system, API software and an application for controlling communication functions through a network 11 (see column 9, lines 8-14). The gateway also executes specific applications for certain services such as IP-Telephony through an Internet web access, etc (see column 9, lines 15-27).

The Edson patent further teaches that the gateway software also sets priorities for different types of communications. For example, the gateway may assign a higher priority to real-time communications, such as IP-telephone service, than it does to other communications or activities. For example, software downloads and news items on selected topics are assigned a lower priority than real time communications (see column 9, lines 27-32).

However, it is believed that there is no necessity that the real-time communications should be performed at higher priority. In other words, the real-time communications are allowed to be performed at lower priority.

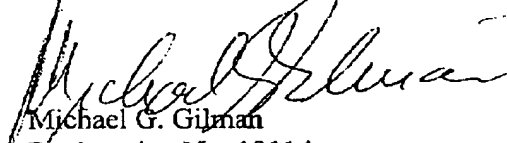
The Amro patent teaches a method and system for remotely controlling an appliance, including a first wireless communication port, by using a portable digital device. The portable digital device includes a processor and a second wireless communication port coupled with the processor (see Abstract). The architecture 250 of the appliance 120 includes an interface 270 including application program interfaces (see column 5, lines 54-67). Once uploaded, the interface 270 provides the portable digital device 110 with information relating to the configuration and the functions of the appliance 120. Via the portable digital device 110, a user can remotely obtain data from and perform operations on the appliance 120 (see column 6, lines 32-38). The digital device 110 can mimic the graphical interface of the appliance 120 on its display 116. The user is allowed to control the appliance 120 through the graphical user interface displayed on the display 116 of the portable digital device 110. The user can view the status of the appliance 120 on the display 116 (see column 6, lines 55-62).

However, neither the Edson nor the Amro patents teach, or even suggest, preferential acceptance of a control instruction to perform a particular series of operations in preference to

other non-preferred operations. For all of the above reasons, it is believed that the subject-matter of the amended claims 1 and 29, and therefore of all of the claims dependent from these independent claims, is clearly patentably distinguished from the disclosure of the Edson patent alone or even taken in combination with the disclosure of the Amro patent. Thus, the rejection of the patentability of applicants' claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) should now be withdrawn.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment: Fig. 55A as corrected

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